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CONTROLCENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Syria

DATE:

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SUBJECT Fawzi Qawuqji and the Jebel Druze

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SUPPLEMENT

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EVALUATION OF SOURCE

1. the presence of Fawzi Qawuqji (hero of the Druze revolt of 1925-27 and of the Palestine revolt of 1936-39) in Damascus is a source of embarrassment to members of the Syrian Government, including Ahmad Shrabati, Defense Minister. Qawuqji's popularity and reputation among the masses make him a possibly decisive factor in the coming elections, and the Government cannot decide how dependable or useful he might be. They are believed to be considering giving him the strategic job of Commander-in-Chief of the Syrian Army or, on the other hand, relegating him to the minor position of Military Attaché to the Arab League. Meanwhile he is the guest of the State and is provided with a car and chauffeur and the top floor of a second rate hotel, the Qasr al-Sharq, where he receives his admirers.

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2. Government-fostered tension between the Hauran and Jebel Druze having exploded prematurely in the incident of Sheikh Masqin (see [redacted]), it was reportedly decided that Qawuqji could be employed to conciliate the Druzes. Accordingly, arrangements were made for him to visit the area on 15 April. Sultan Pasha al-Atrash, Druze leader of the 1925 revolt, was induced to come to Damascus to honor Qawuqji by riding back to the Jebel Druze with him. Qawuqji was also accompanied by Amir 'Adil Arslan, Minister of Education, who, it was hoped, would be favorably received by the Druze leaders. (Although Arslan is a Druze in name, he is officially a Sunni Moslem, and in no sense reflects the interests of the Druzes, which has created dissatisfaction among them as they want to be represented in the Cabinet. See [redacted].

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3. During his visit to the area, Qawuqji lunched with Amir Hasan al-Atrash, Governor of the Jebel Druze, at Sunwida, he also visited the battlefields of 1925, and went with Sultan Pasha to his village, al-Qari'ah. The trip is believed to have been successful, inasmuch as the Druzes have been more amenable lately, and Amir Hasan has since lunched with President Shukri Quwatli.

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